



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

March 24, 2015

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Proposed Social Security Disability Insurance provisions in Fiscal Year 2016 House Budget Resolution

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

We write as co-chairs of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Social Security Task Force to express our strong opposition to all proposals to include provisions in the Fiscal Year 2016 House Budget Resolution that would:

- Create a point of order against reallocation of Social Security payroll contributions;¹ as described below, reallocation is needed to ensure the ability of Social Security's Disability Insurance (DI) Trust Fund to pay full scheduled benefits after 2016; and/or
- Reduce or eliminate benefits for individuals who concurrently receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and unemployment insurance (UI).

The CCD is a coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of the approximately 57 million children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. SSDI's modest but vital assistance supports these goals for approximately 11 million Americans. SSDI helps beneficiaries with disabilities and their families to meet their everyday needs -- keeping a roof over their heads, putting food on the table, paying for out-of-pocket medical and disability-related expenses, and meeting other basic living expenses.

Congress has known for the last two decades that Social Security's DI Trust Fund will need to be replenished by the end of 2016 to prevent a devastating 20 percent across-the-board cut in SSDI

¹Such as Section 806(b), "Policy on Disability Insurance", in H. Con. Res. 27, the Fiscal Year 2016 House Budget Resolution as approved by the Committee on Rules on March 23, 2015.

benefits. The need for action now is no surprise, but stems from long-term demographic trends including an aging workforce now in its disability-prone years, and an increase in work by women that has led to an increase in women's eligibility for Social Security, including SSDI.

Reallocation -- without accompanying cuts to Social Security coverage, eligibility, or benefits -- is the common-sense, responsible solution that Congress should enact promptly.

- On January 15, 2015 fifty members of CCD voiced their strong opposition to a provision in the House rules for the 114th Congress (H. Res. 5) that creates unnecessary obstacles to House consideration of this necessary reallocation of Social Security payroll contributions (<http://www.c-c-d.org/fichiers/CCD-Letter-on-House-Rules--114th-01-15-15.pdf>).
- On March 17, 2015 seventy-five national organizations, including members of CCD, the Coalition on Human Needs, and the Strengthen Social Security Coalition, voiced their strong opposition to a harmful proposal that has been floated as a benefit cut that could potentially accompany reallocation: a cut to SSDI benefits for individuals who concurrently receive UI (<http://www.c-c-d.org/fichiers/CCD-Letter-DI-UI-03-17-15FINAL.pdf>).

Unfortunately, several versions of the Fiscal Year 2016 House Budget Resolution now moving to the House floor seek to expand roadblocks to reallocation from the House to the Senate. If adopted in a joint budget resolution, these provisions would create a 60-vote point of order, which the Senate would have to overcome to prevent across-the-board cuts in SSDI benefits after 2016.

Additionally, several versions of the Fiscal Year 2016 House Budget Resolution include proposals to cut concurrent SSDI and UI benefits.

Once again, the House of Representatives is considering pending legislation that would put at risk the economic well-being of the 11 million current SSDI beneficiaries as well as the 165 million Americans who pay in to Social Security today and may need SSDI in the future.

We are deeply dismayed that the House would consider including these harmful provisions in its Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Resolution. These proposals run directly counter to the voices and views expressed by CCD members and people with disabilities, and put at risk modest but vital SSDI benefits which are a lifeline for millions of Americans. We urge Members of Congress to reject any proposals to include these harmful provisions in the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Resolution.

Sincerely,

CCD Social Security Task Force Co-Chairs:

Kate Lang, Justice in Aging
Web Phillips, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
Jeanne Morin, National Association of Disability Representatives
T.J. Sutcliffe, The Arc of the United States
Ethel Zelenske, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives

CC: Members, House of Representatives
Members, United States Senate